

MEMBER PROFILE

STEVE MARTENS, CPA, CA
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE
SILOAM MISSION



On April 20, 2010, off the coast of Louisiana in the Gulf of Mexico, the Deepwater Horizon offshore drilling rig failed. The main cause – as would be later discovered – was defective cement on the ocean-floor well. The result? Nearly five million barrels of oil surged into the ocean, destroying beaches, precious wetlands and doing immeasurable harm to the surrounding eco-system.

Several months later, Steve Martens, CPA, CA, a forensic accountant with Deloitte, boarded a plane at the Winnipeg International Airport bound for the disaster area.

“Given the nature of the event, and the potential adverse effects on so many, legal disputes were certain to follow,” said Martens.

As a forensic accountant, Martens had the opportunity to join a team of dispute specialists working along the Gulf Coast.

“In anticipation of future litigation, the primary task at that early stage was the preservation of potential evidence. That included travelling to the various locations along the coast, from which clean-up operations were being staged, to ensure that any relevant data was being collected and preserved in a manner which could later be relied upon in a court of law,” he said.

It was work that Martens could not have anticipated while growing up in southern Manitoba, or after moving to Winnipeg in grade 11 and graduating from the University of Winnipeg Collegiate.

“I immediately went on to university and began working towards a computer science degree, but it wasn’t long before I realized that wasn’t for me,” explains Martens. “I worked for a number of years after that in retail and retail management before deciding to go back to university.”

Martens enrolled at the University of Manitoba and obtained a commerce degree.

“I was about ten years older than everyone else,” he recalls with a laugh. “There were a few other students who were also older. Despite the age difference, I was really accepted and enjoyed my time there,” he adds.

Martens then obtained his Chartered Accountant designation.



“I had always had an interest in business and financial matters so I considered obtaining an accounting designation as a good way to work in business. I saw others who had the designation and thought they had interesting careers and figured it would be a good move for me too.”

After graduating, he articled with Deloitte in Winnipeg. After five years of gaining valuable experience, he took a position with United Grain Growers (now Viterra).

“It was a fairly diverse experience. I started off heading up a recently formed asset risk management group before moving on to do business process redesign. During that time, I was introduced to forensic accounting and insurance work. After that, I realized I’d like to focus on forensic accounting fulltime.”

Martens’ path took him back to Deloitte. “Maybe it was fate. Interestingly enough, the first assignment I ever worked on when I first joined Deloitte was forensic

in nature. I got to pull together lots of information, do analysis, and fill in the blanks.”

Shortly after returning to Deloitte, Martens moved to the Financial Advisory Services area focusing on forensic accounting work.

“It was a mixture of investigative work, dispute-related work, quantifying damages and business insurance losses,” he explains.

“One moment that stands out for me was working on a massive insurance loss file related to the flood of the

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century in 1997. It was a large and complex file and a great learning experience. One of the highlights was ultimately sitting down at the end in a room with insurance representatives, adjustors and client management and hammering out a final settlement. I worked on that file for 18 months and I always look back on that and remember that day. Things got done and everyone was happy.”

In 2002, Martens was on the move again.

“My faith is very important to me and the church I’m a part of had a need. I went to work for my church, Grant Memorial Baptist, as CFO and Director of Administration. My responsibility also included a private school and nearby seniors buildings. It was a busy time and my first experience working for a not-for-profit.”

After two years Martens was satisfied with what had been accomplished and he began looking for another opportunity to continue his growth.

“So, I went back to Deloitte,” he laughs. “They were nice enough to take me back.”

Martens continued to work as a forensic accountant at Deloitte and fondly remembers some of the unique projects he worked on.

“During the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s I went to Thailand to assist local authorities because a number of their financial institutions had failed. I was part of a great international team including a number of colleagues from financial restructuring. I also did fraud investigation work in India. It was a large international company that required our assistance in dealing with instances of fraud by employees.”

In September 2015 Martens joined Siloam Mission as the Director of Finance. “I always thought I’d like to go do something with a greater social purpose. Helping people is important to me.”

Siloam is a well-known organization in the community. I felt it fit with what I was interested in. Lots of good work gets done here. We deal with the immediate needs of those that come here as well as important proactive work to help people get back into the community.

As Director of Finance, Martens’ responsibilities include accounting oversight, financial reporting, compliance and risk management. He has a small team that deals with day-to-day accounting. He has also recently taken on responsibility for IT and facilities management.

“I’m also responsible for financial matters associated with the current expansion of the Mission. Our drop-in and dining area currently seats about 160 people and each meal we feed, on average, close to 500. It can be hard to have to cycle people through, especially when the weather is poor.”

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An existing building located directly behind the main building on Princess Street is currently being renovated. It will accommodate about 450 and feature a new and more efficient kitchen area.

“We thank our generous donors for making the expansion possible,” Martens added.

“It’s rewarding work. Even though the people who use our services rarely see me, I really feel like I’m making a difference in those people’s lives. It’s important work.”

Martens took a moment to reflect on his career path so far.

“There’s been nothing but potential opportunities since I got my accounting designation. One thing I find surprising is how many different things you can do with an accounting designation. I’ve had an opportunity to work in places around the world, do unique work, meet some great people and give back to the community. It’s rewarding and worthwhile.”